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THE WOMAN I BROUGHT IS OUR ONLY CHANCE TO STRAIGHTEN THIS ALL OUT. SHE'S WAITING OUTSIDE. I BELIEVE YOU KNOW HER AS...

HEY MOM, LOOK -- THE FOOTBALL THING'S WAKING UP!

MAXX! WHAT'S WITH THE LAMP SHADE?

HEY -- IT WAS YOUR IDEA, REMEMBER?

WELL, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T TWEAK IT A BIT.

LESSEE.....THERE!



YES!!! THE OLD MAXX'S BACK!

BUT YOU'RE STILL DAVE, TOO -- RIGHT?



WHO'S DAVE?

SHY!

HEY THESE BUBBLES HAVE...



DADDY, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

SARA?

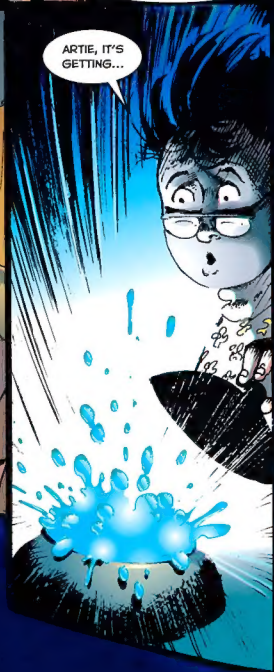
...BUGS IN 'EM?

MATTOX, COME HERE, DAMMIT!



OH GOD, IT'S THE URN! GLORIE, DON'T OPEN IT!!!!

...BUT THERE'S LIGHT INSIDE...



ARTIE, IT'S GETTING...



...BRIGHTER.

HEY LARRY -- WHAT HAPPENED? EVERYTHING'S SORT OF...

...DISAPPEARED.

WHAT DOES
IRWIN SAY HAPPENED,
JOHN?

WHO GIVES A
RAT'S ASS?? HE
COULD'VE MENTIONED
THAT THE CREEP HE SENT US
TO RUB OUT TURNS PEOPLE
INTO BUGS, FER #@*!!
CRISSAKE!!!

NOW, LARRY,
I'M SURE MAJ.
ROSENTHAL HAS A
LARGER PLAN ON
HIS MIND.

GLORIE, WHAT
HAPPENED? I
FEEL BIGGER.

YEAH, MARK,
YOU LOOK OLDER,
TOO. IN YOUR TEENS,
I'D SAY...

I SAW AN
ANGEL, HIS NAME
WAS IRWIN, AND HE
SAID THESE BUBBLES
RETURN US TO
OUR UNBORN
SELVES.

GREAT.
WHAT GOOD
IS THAT?

GLORIE --
WAIT! WE'RE
BREAKING
APART!!!

IT'S OK,
MARK. NOTHING
CAN HURT US HERE
-- IT'S SAFE! THE
ANGEL SAID SO.

DON'T RESIST--
JUST FOLLOW YOUR
BUBBLE, I'LL SEE
YOU AGAIN, I
PROMISE...

LOOK IN YOUR
BUBBLE CENTER,
MARK, AND THE PAST
WILL BECOME...

...CLEAR.

HI,
GLORIE.

DADDY!!

HERE SWEETY.
IT'S A PRESENT. IT
HELPS YOU BREATHE.

THANKS, DADDY.
ARE YOU GONNA
STAY THIS TIME?

SURE, HONEY, IF
YOU WANT.

LIES.

REMEMBER
OUR SONG? "AS I WAS
WALKING DOWN THE STREET
LAST NIGHT..."

"...A PRETTY
LITTLE GIRL CAME
INTO SIGHT."

"I BOWED
AND SMILED AND ASKED
HER NAME,"

"SHE SAID,
"HOLD IT, BUD --
I DON'T PLAY
THAT GAME."

GLORIE'S STORY

DAD ALWAYS MANAGED
TO SAY WHAT PEOPLE
WANTED TO HEAR...

...THEN LEAVE THEM EMPTY HANDED.
Y'SEE, I BARELY REMEMBER MY REAL
DAD. HE WAS A FLIMFLAM MAN. I
NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN AFTER HE
GAVE ME THAT INHALER.

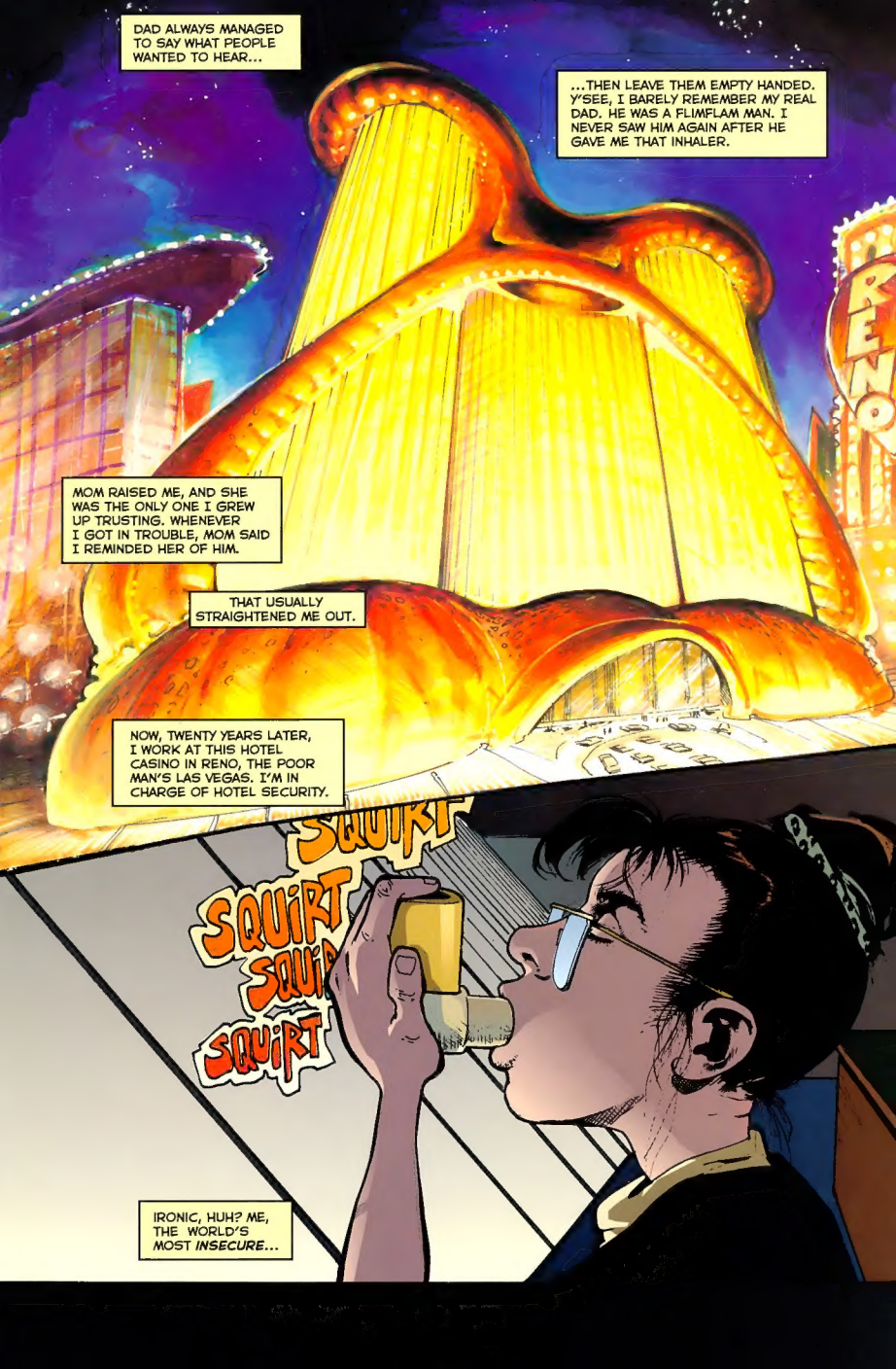
MOM RAISED ME, AND SHE
WAS THE ONLY ONE I GREW
UP TRUSTING. WHENEVER
I GOT IN TROUBLE, MOM SAID
I REMINDED HER OF HIM.

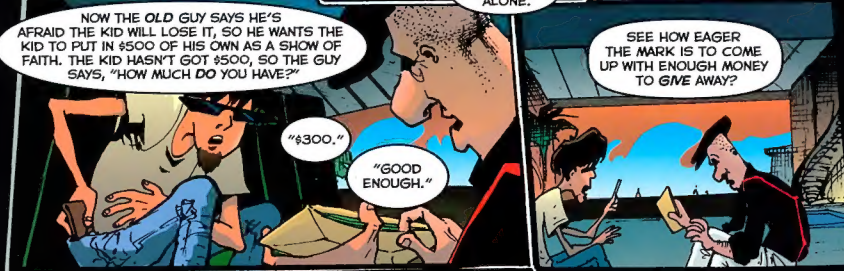
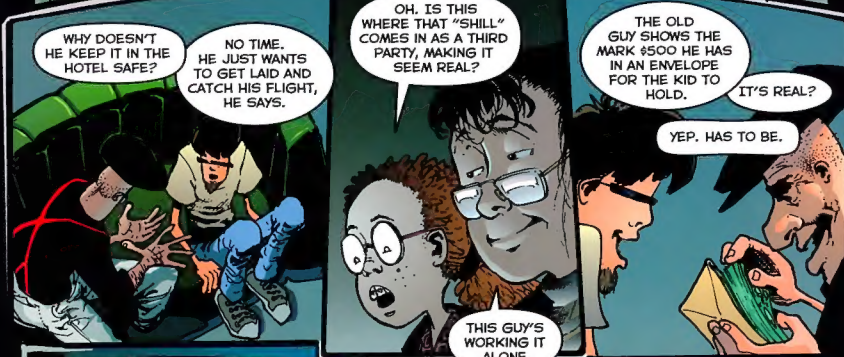
THAT USUALLY
STRAIGHTENED ME OUT.

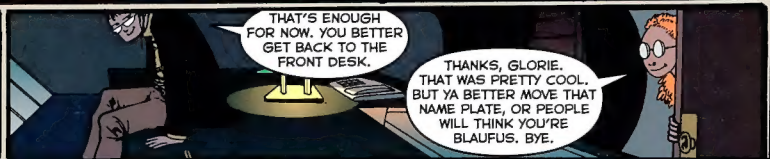
NOW, TWENTY YEARS LATER,
I WORK AT THIS HOTEL
CASINO IN RENO, THE POOR
MAN'S LAS VEGAS. I'M IN
CHARGE OF HOTEL SECURITY.

SQUIRT
SQUIRT
SQUIRT

IRONIC, HUH? ME,
THE WORLD'S
MOST INSECURE...







THANKS,
GUYS. I'LL TAKE
IT FROM HERE.
WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?

MAC.

MAC
WHAT?

JUST
MAC.

OK, "MAC".
YOU'VE GOT FIVE
MINUTES TO GIVE
ME A GOOD REASON
NOT TO CALL THE
COPS.

HEH.

WHAT'S
SO FUNNY?

NOTHIN'.
WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?

I DON'T THINK YOU
GET WHAT'S HAPPENING
HERE. I'M IN CONTROL HERE --
I'LL ASK THE QUESTIONS. YOU CON
MEN ARE ALL THE SAME. THAT
LAME ENVELOPE SCHEME --
GIMME A BREAK.

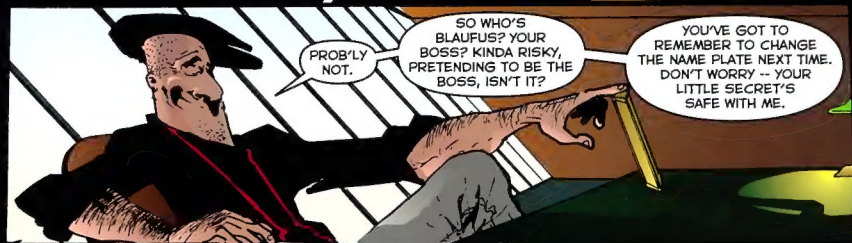
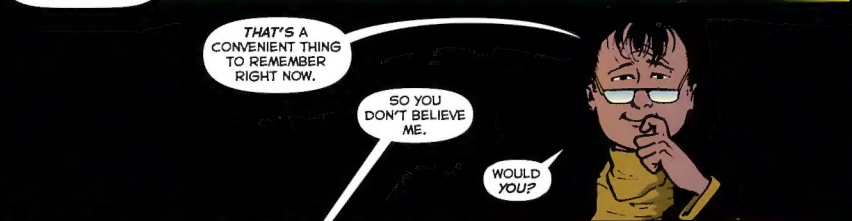
HE WAS
A LAME MARK.
WHAT CAN
I SAY?

NO, YOU'RE
A LAME CON.
HURTING OTHERS
JUST TO...

I DON'T HURT
PEOPLE -- THEY HURT
THEMSELVES. I JUST PICK
UP THE MONEY THAT
FALLS FROM THEIR
POCKETS.

UNBELIEVABLE.

I'LL TAKE THAT
AS A YES. HMM. YOU'RE
NOT A SALLY -- THAT'S TOO
CHEERY FOR YOU. DEFINITELY
NOT AN EDNA -- EVEN
YOU'RE NOT THAT
FUNKY.





EXCUSE ME
FOR A SEC.

DON'T BE
ASHAMED OF
YOUR ASTHMA,
GLORIE. YOUR
DAD TOLD ME.




I'M NOT
"ASHAMED".

THEN WHY DO YOU
TURN AWAY? YOUR
DAD GAVE YOU AN
INHALER LIKE THAT,
DIDN'T HE? HE
TOLD ME ONCE --
I REMEMBER.

GOD, I
FORGOT ALL
ABOUT THAT SONG!
I GUESS YOU REALLY
DID KNOW HIM. BUT
THAT'S NOT GONNA
SAVE YOUR ASS.

WHAT
IS?



HE USED TO
SING THIS OLD SONG,
LET'S SEE -- HOW'D IT GO?
SOMETHIN' ABOUT "BOWED
OR SMILED AND ASKED
HER NAME..."

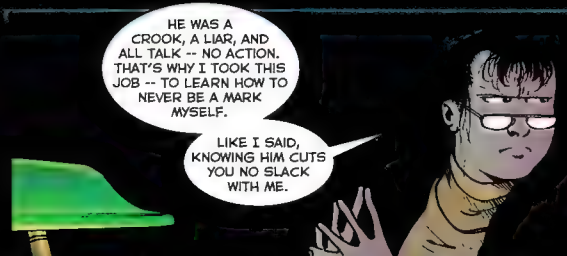
"...AND SHE
SAID, HOLD
IT, BUD--"

"I DON'T
PLAY THAT
GAME."

YOU'RE A
PRETTY COCKY OLD
GUY, MAC.


NOT COCKY.
I JUST KNOW PEOPLE.
THAT'S MY BUSINESS.

BUT LET'S
TALK ABOUT
YOUR DAD...



HE WAS A
CROOK, A LIAR, AND
ALL TALK -- NO ACTION.
THAT'S WHY I TOOK THIS
JOB -- TO LEARN HOW TO
NEVER BE A MARK
MYSELF.

LIKE I SAID,
KNOWING HIM CUTS
YOU NO SLACK
WITH ME.

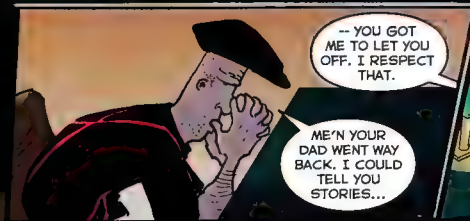


THAT'S TOO
BAD, 'CAUSE I
KNOW FOR A
FACT...




...HE CARED
FOR YOU.

NOW WHO'S
CONNING WHO.
BUT I'LL GIVE
YOU THIS--




-- YOU GOT
ME TO LET YOU
OFF. I RESPECT
THAT.

ME'N YOUR
DAD WENT WAY
BACK. I COULD
TELL YOU
STORIES...




TIME'S UP.
NOW BEAT IT,
BEFORE I CHANGE
MY MIND.



YOU WON'T
CHANGE YOUR
MIND.

HOW DO
YOU KNOW?




YOUR WEAKNESS WAS A "TELL". I MAY HAVE PLAYED A FEW HEARTSTRINGS, BUT YOU DID THE REST.

THE MARK WANTS TO BELIEVE. BUT EVERYTHING I SAID ABOUT YOUR DAD CARING FOR YOU WAS TRUE. UNLIKE HIM, I DON'T LIE -- EXCEPT PROFESSIONALLY, OF COURSE.



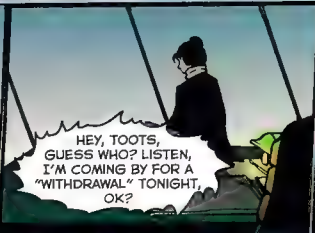
NO REALLY -- WHAT'S MY WEAKNESS?

YOU GAVE ME FIVE MINUTES.



CLICK
GLORIE, I'VE GOT A CALL FROM YOUR DRY CLEANER ON THE LINE --

I'LL PUT IT ON THE SPEAKER, LISA.



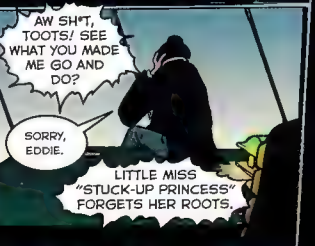
HEY, TOOTS, GUESS WHO? LISTEN, I'M COMING BY FOR A "WITHDRAWAL" TONIGHT, OK?



UH... YOU THERE?

YEAH.

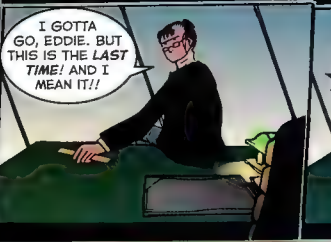
STUPID BITCH. WHY DON'T YOU F%\$#@ ANSWER ME THEN? %\$#@%666!!!




AW SH*T, TOOTS! SEE WHAT YOU MADE ME GO AND DO?

SORRY, EDDIE.


LITTLE MISS "STUCK-UP PRINCESS" FORGETS HER ROOTS.



I GOTTA GO, EDDIE. BUT THIS IS THE LAST TIME! AND I MEAN IT!!



SURE, SURE, TOOTS. NO PROBLEM. THE LAST TIME. SEE YA TONIGHT.



THAT F%\$#@BAST@%\$#...



YEAH, MOM,
I KNOW, BUT --



MOM, I DON'T CARE
WHAT JENNY MACKLIN'S
DAUGHTER DOES. I LIKE DOING
THIS. BUT -- BUT YOU DON'T NEED
KIDS TO FEEL COMPLETE. OR AT
LEAST I DON'T... I AM NOT
MISSING OUT ON A
"NATURAL CYCLE."

MERV

MY CYCLE IS EAT
CHIPS, PAINT MY TOENAILS,
AND WATCH TV WITH MERV. OOPS --
THERE'S THE OTHER LINE. GOTTA
GO. I AM NOT MAKING IT UP.
I'LL SEE YA. BYE.



SIGH



OH, MERV --
HOW'D I GET MYSELF
INTO THIS?

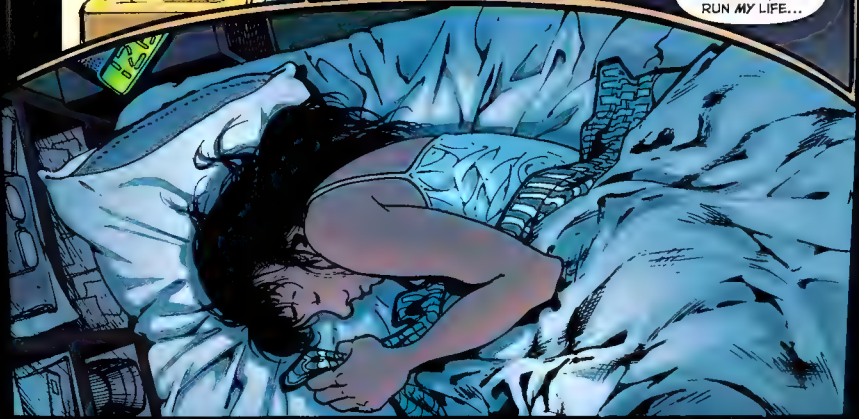


'CAUSE I'M
A %%% IDIOT --
THAT'S HOW.



DRY
CLEANER, MY
ASS.

STUPID NAME.
I'LL TEACH THAT
LITTLE BASS%% TO
RUN MY LIFE...



I HAD A DREAM. I WAS A KID AGAIN, PLAYING HOOKY IN MY BOSS'S OFFICE WITH AN OLD FRIEND FROM SCHOOL, NAMED SARA. ONLY SHE HAD A BIG, OVAL-SHAPED HEAD AND SAID "MEEP" A LOT.

THE HOTEL LOBBY WAS FILLED WITH PAPER AND GARBAGE. BUT WE WERE SAFE HERE INSIDE.

SUDDENLY, A DAGGER WITH A FACE ON THE HANDLE BREAKS THROUGH THE GLASS.

GARBAGE STARTS FLOODING IN THROUGH THE HOLE. I TRY TO PICK UP THE GARBAGE, BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH. IT KEEPS PILING UP.

THE KNIFE'S FACE IS THE CON FROM WORK.

HE LAUGHS.

IF THE BOSS FINDS THE OFFICE LIKE THIS, HE'LL GROUND ME FOREVER.

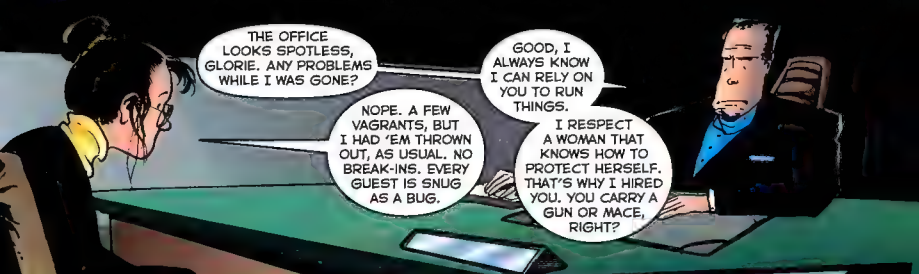
I CAN'T CLEAN IT UP FAST ENOUGH.

THEN I SEE WHAT'S ON THE PAPERS-- THEY'RE ALL DRY CLEANING BILLS!

**KNOCK
KNOCK!**

SUDDENLY MY BOSS CALLS OUT, "GLORIE? I'M BACK! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY OFFICE?"

"YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER."



THE OFFICE
LOOKS SPOTLESS,
GLORIE. ANY PROBLEMS
WHILE I WAS GONE?

GOOD, I
ALWAYS KNOW
I CAN RELY ON
YOU TO RUN
THINGS.

NOPE. A FEW
VAGRANTS, BUT
I HAD 'EM THROWN
OUT, AS USUAL. NO
BREAK-INS. EVERY
GUEST IS SNUG
AS A BUG.

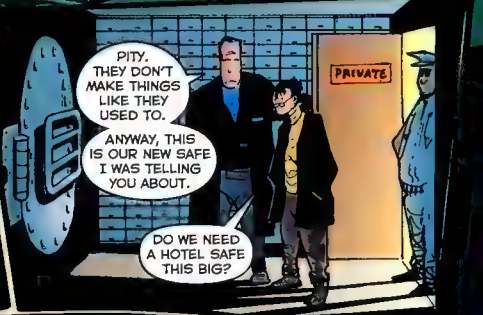
I RESPECT
A WOMAN THAT
KNOWS HOW TO
PROTECT HERSELF.
THAT'S WHY I HIRED
YOU. YOU CARRY A
GUN OR MACE,
RIGHT?



NO, BUT ONCE
MY STEPDAD BOUGHT
ME A KNIFE FOR
PROTECTION.

DID IT
WORK?

NO.



PITY.
THEY DON'T
MAKE THINGS
LIKE THEY
USED TO.

ANYWAY, THIS
IS OUR NEW SAFE
I WAS TELLING
YOU ABOUT.

DO WE NEED
A HOTEL SAFE
THIS BIG?



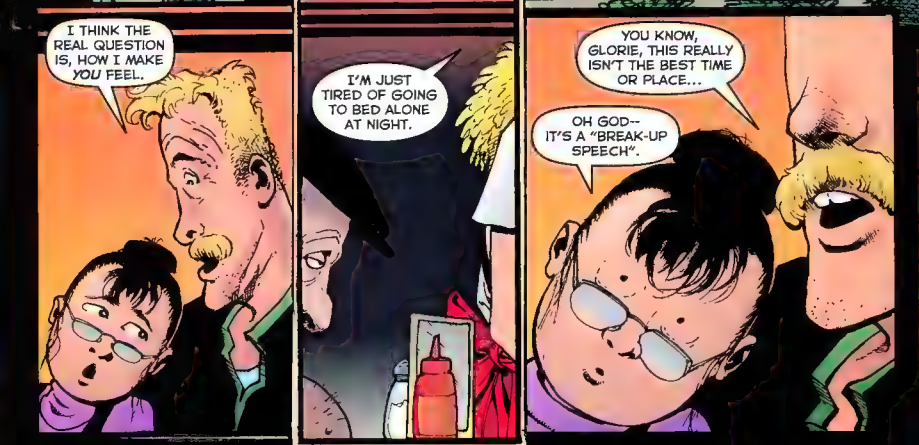
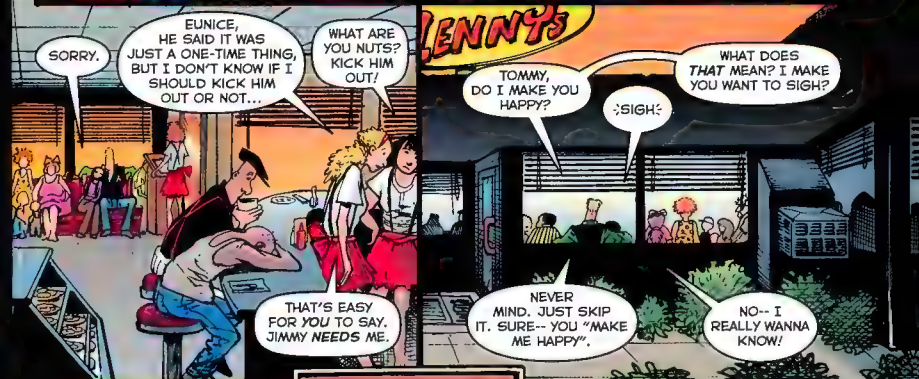
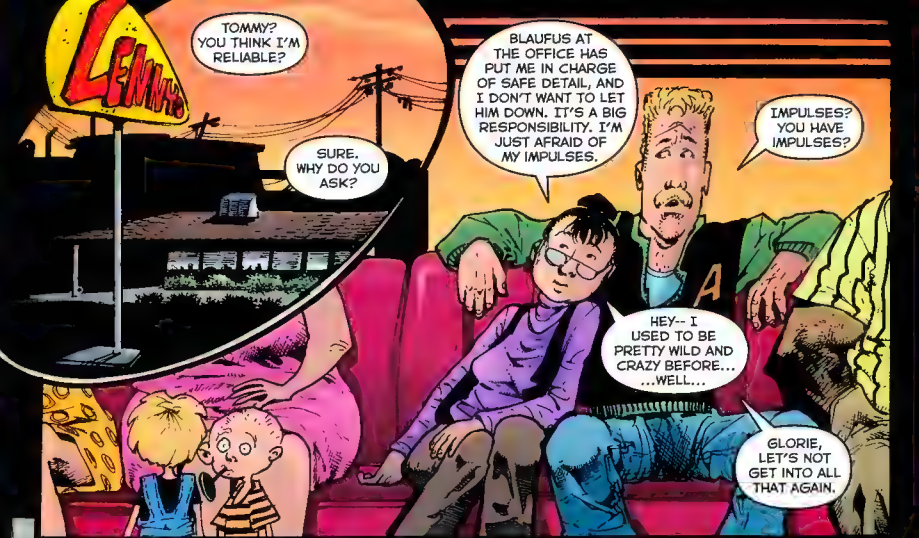
PROB'LY
NOT, BUT IT LOOKS
COOL.

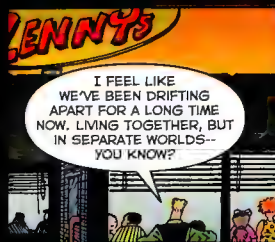
SERIOUSLY,
THOUGH, PEOPLE
GAMBLE AND HOLD
LARGE AMOUNTS OF
MONEY, AND IT'S UP
TO YOU TO PROTECT
IT. I'M RELYING ON
YOU, GLORIE.



I DON'T
KNOW WHAT YOUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH
YOUR OWN FATHER WAS
LIKE, BUT I'VE ALWAYS
THOUGHT OF YOU
AS... WELL, YOU
KNOW...

I KNOW,
MR. B. DON'T
WORRY-- YOU
CAN COUNT
ON ME.

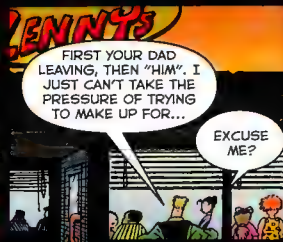




I FEEL LIKE WE'VE BEEN DRIFTING APART FOR A LONG TIME NOW. LIVING TOGETHER, BUT IN SEPARATE WORLDS-- YOU KNOW?

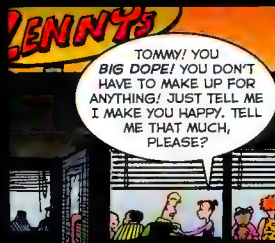


EVER SINCE THAT NIGHT, I'VE TRIED TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO BE THERE FOR YOU, BUT NOTHING I DO IS ENOUGH.



FIRST YOUR DAD LEAVING, THEN "HIM". I JUST CAN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE OF TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR...

EXCUSE ME?



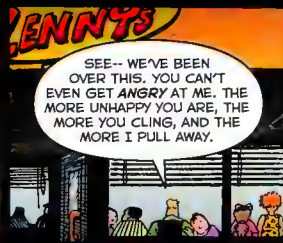
TOMMY! YOU BIG DOPE! YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE UP FOR ANYTHING! JUST TELL ME I MAKE YOU HAPPY. TELL ME THAT MUCH, PLEASE?



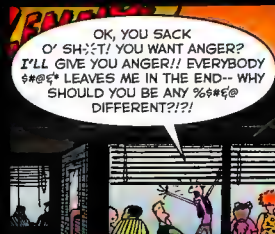
I THINK IT'S CRUELLER TO PRETEND. I'M SICK OF PRETENDING, AREN'T YOU?

NOT YET-- NOT NOW!

JUST HOLD ME.



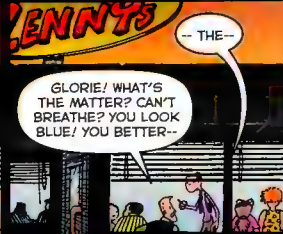
SEE-- WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS. YOU CAN'T EVEN GET ANGRY AT ME. THE MORE UNHAPPY YOU ARE, THE MORE YOU CLING, AND THE MORE I PULL AWAY.



OK, YOU SACK O' SH:~?! YOU WANT ANGER? I'LL GIVE YOU ANGER!! EVERYBODY %*% LEAVES ME IN THE END-- WHY SHOULD YOU BE ANY %*% DIFFERENT?!!?

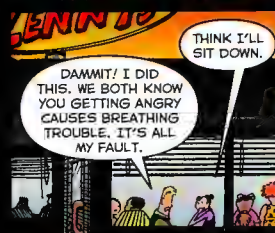


IF YOU WANNA LEAVE, BEAT IT! DON'T DRAG ME THROUGH THE %*% MUD, PRETENDING TO CARE IN THE--



-- THE --

GLORIE! WHAT'S THE MATTER? CAN'T BREATHE? YOU LOOK BLUE! YOU BETTER--

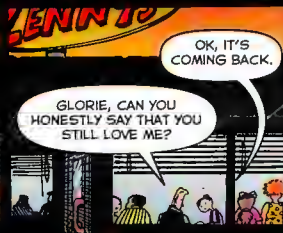


THINK I'LL SIT DOWN.

DAMMIT! I DID THIS. WE BOTH KNOW YOU GETTING ANGRY CAUSES BREATHING TROUBLE. IT'S ALL MY FAULT.

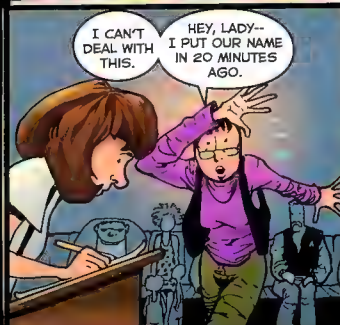


DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE-- LISTENING TO YOU FEEL GUILT, OR SUFFOCATING.



OK, IT'S COMING BACK.

GLORIE, CAN YOU HONESTLY SAY THAT YOU STILL LOVE ME?

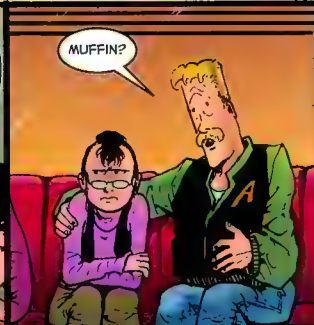


I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS.

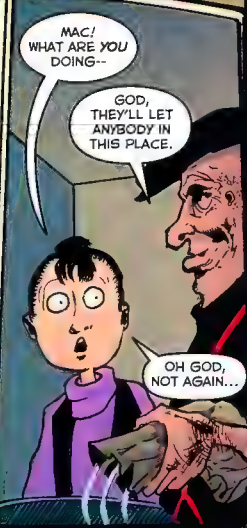
HEY, LADY-- I PUT OUR NAME IN 20 MINUTES AGO.



SORRY, HON. I GUESS SOMEBODY FORGOT TO TAKE IT DOWN. I CAN PUT YOU DOWN HERE AT THE BOTTOM, THOUGH...



MUFFIN?





HERE,
BREATHE INTO
THIS.

C'MON, LET'S
GET OUT OF THIS
NOISY RESTAURANT AND
GO NEXT DOOR
INTO THE...

...LOUNGE.
THERE-- THAT'S BETTER.
YOU OKAY?

YEAH,
JUST RAN
OUT OF...

AIR?

YEAH. SO,
MAC-- YOU SNEAKIN'
AROUND CORNERS NOW,
TRYING TO CATCH ME
ALL VULNERABLE?

EVERYONE'S
VULNERABLE, HAS
A WEAKNESS, A
'TELL'.

YEAH?
SO WHAT'S
YOURS?

FAIR ENOUGH.
WE'VE GOTTA START
SOMEWHERE IF YOU'RE
EVER GONNA
TRUST ME.

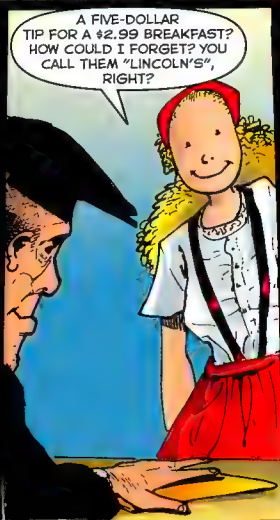
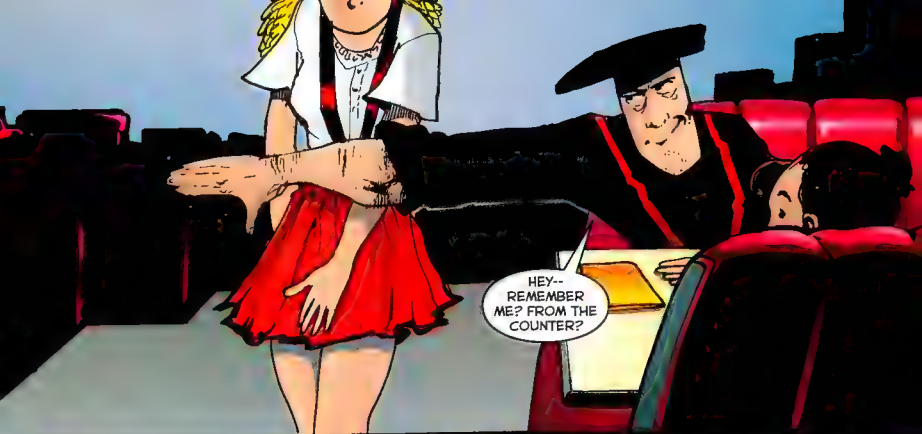
MY WEAKNESS
IS I CARE ABOUT YOU. AND
NOW MY WEAKNESS IS YOU *KNOW*
IT. BUT LUCKILY YOU'RE
TOO STUPID TO
ACT ON IT.

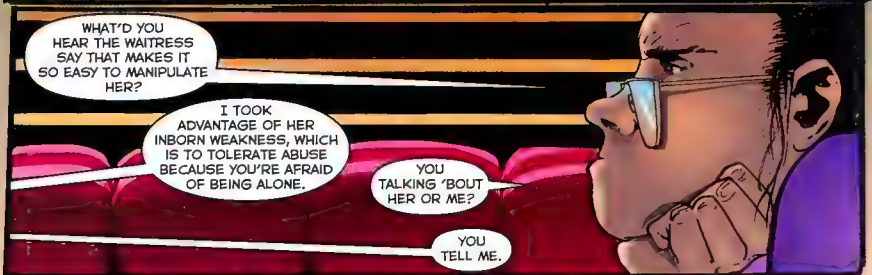
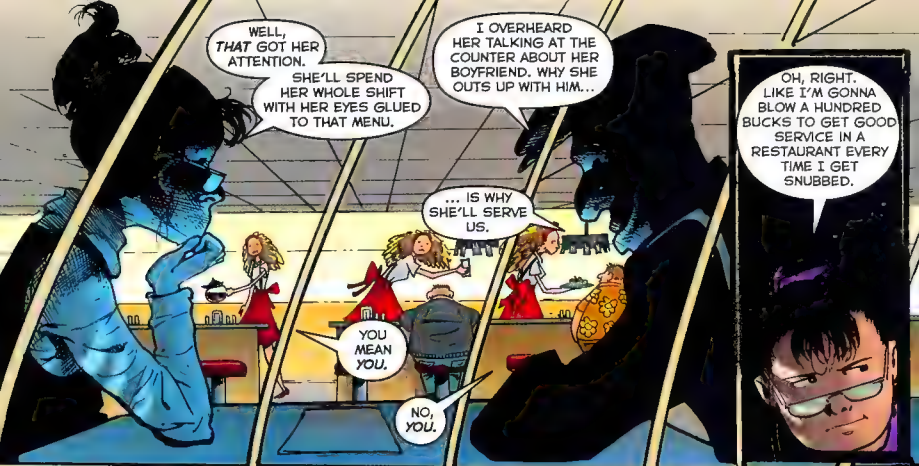
DON'T BE
TOO SURE.

EXCUSE
ME, MA'M,
COULD I--

DAMMIT! THESE
BIMBOS ALWAYS IGNORE
ME-- EVERYTIME! THEY KNOW
I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY
TO LEAVE A BIG TIP, SO
THEY SNUB ME.

BECAUSE
YOU LET 'EM WATCH
THIS...







REFILL THAT
DRINK?

NO
THANKS.



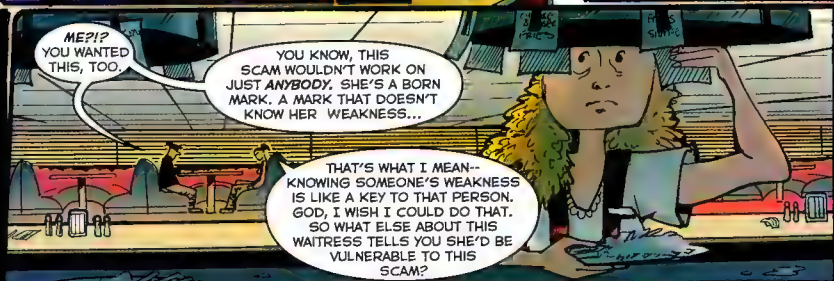
GOD, MAC.
SHE'S REALLY
STARTING TO
ANNOY ME.



YOU GUYS
OK OVER HE--

WE'RE
FINE.

YOU'VE
CREATED A
MONSTER!



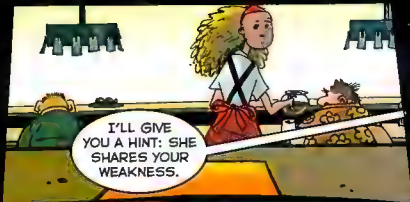
ME?!?
YOU WANTED
THIS, TOO.

YOU KNOW, THIS
SCAM WOULDN'T WORK ON
JUST *ANYBODY*. SHE'S A BORN
MARK. A MARK THAT DOESN'T
KNOW HER WEAKNESS...

THAT'S WHAT I MEAN--
KNOWING SOMEONE'S WEAKNESS
IS LIKE A KEY TO THAT PERSON.
GOD, I WISH I COULD DO THAT.
SO WHAT ELSE ABOUT THIS
WAITRESS TELLS YOU SHE'D BE
VULNERABLE TO THIS
SCAM?



CAN'T YOU
SEE IT?



I'LL GIVE
YOU A HINT: SHE
SHARES YOUR
WEAKNESS.



OK, MAC-- I'M
HOOKED. WHAT'S
MY GODDAMNED
WEAKNESS?

IT'S NOT A
WORD OR A PHRASE,
IT'S AN ATTITUDE.

EVEN IF I TOLD YOU,
YOU WOULDN'T HEAR IT.
YOU'RE BLIND TO IT. HAVE TO BE.
IF WE KNEW OUR WEAKNESSES
BEFORE WE WERE READY,
THEY'D DESTROY US.

WHAT A
MELODRAMATIC
PILE OF SHIT!



YOU
WANT A
JOB?

WORKING
FOR YOU? DOING
WHAT?

SHOW ME
ABOUT PEOPLE. ABOUT
SCAMS. HELP ME AND MY
EMPLOYEES KNOW OUR
WEAKNESSES SO WE WON'T
GET SCREWED.

IF YOUR
BOSS KNEW ABOUT
THIS, "PAYING AN
EX-CON TO...

... HELPING
ME PROTECT
MYSELF AND
THE HOTEL."

I NEED
TO KNOW HOW
TO PROTECT
MYSELF.

I WON'T
BE HURT BY
ANYONE.

AND WHO'LL
PROTECT YOU
FROM ME?

OH, YOU
WON'T HURT
ME.

WHY
NOT?

'CAUSE YOU
HAVE SOMETHING
TO LEARN FROM
ME, TOO.

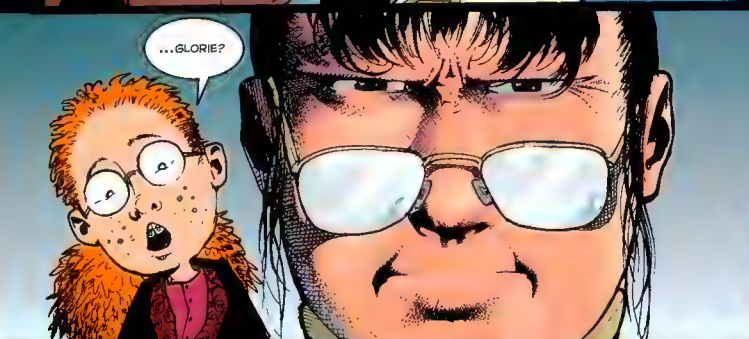
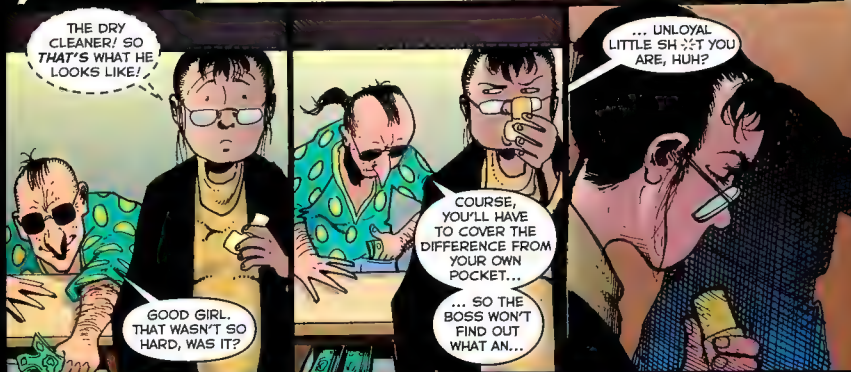
SURE,
KID. DEAL. HEY--
LOOKEE.

NO
MONEY?

EVER
AGAIN...

MAC, THAT'S
PATHETIC! SHE
WORKED HER
ASS OFF FOR
NOTHING!

COMING UP
EMPTY-HANDED IS
WHAT A MARK
KNOWS BEST.



**THE
END**



Getting this ish out was extreme, between Jim Sinclair's vacation and the UPS strike. Fed Ex was constipated with backed-up mail (as you know), so sending stuff around for production was scary, not knowing when/if/where it would arrive. But here we are...

Maxxfolks took advantage of our new e-mail address to write us and to send Head-to-Heads. Cool! By the way, MTV stopped forwarding e-mail from the old address a long time ago. If you wrote to us there in the last year or so, we probably didn't get it. Write now: skieih@webinfo.net. Snailmail's still good, too—unless the PO goes on strike! We even got our first pic from Iceland (thanks, Hulli)! Keep sending in fan Maxx website addresses—we'll check 'em out and start listing them next month.

By the way, your e-mail addresses will NOT be published with your fan letters unless specifically requested. If you want your letter to have your name on it, say so—give us a real name or an "OK-to-publish-my-email-address" (OK2PMEA). Otherwise letters will be anonymous. (And please include your city—we like to know and print where all our fans come from.)

Somebody addressed a Mx Trx letter to "The Men Behind The Maxx" recently, which is cool. But I should point out three women who've been with The Maxx through thick and thin. One is Ronna Vladic at Image, who traffics the book—that is, she whips all our butts into being what we here laughingly call "on time." Another is Tracey Anderson at Olyoptics who, with Steve, colors a big portion of each ish. The third is my wife, Kathy (see "Interview" below). Not to mention all the female Mxhds out there who read Mx and who write in. So there are lots of "Women Behind The Maxx", too.

Finally—see "Maxxcrap" list as promised last month. It's not complete, but has most of the Maxx merchandise ever produced. Most of which is no longer available. Hey—make your own! Mx is kind of a do-it-yourself thing anyway, right?

Dear Sam,

GOOD GRAYY! The Maxx is back! This is good, but please finish the story of Megan! I think she was Julie's first sexual experience. Why, you ask? Page 19, panel 1, top of the page. The strawberry blond-haired girl is leaning over a 3-legged beast. This beast can only be a herald of Julie Winters, the Devourer of Worlds!

Oh Tay!

Jason Hopkins

Corinth, NY

Hmm. Some people thought Julie was Megan, but this guy thought she did Megan. So did Julie/Megan have a gay experience? Does dreaming about the same sex when you're an unhappy teen mean you're gay? If I did my job right, it doesn't matter. (3-legged beast? Ha ha. Very funny.)

Dear Sam,

Yes! Yes! Yes! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I've just

read #31 and loved it! Thank you for bringing back The Maxx! Hey, call me a conservative, but it sure does feel good to have the old Maxx back again and not some freakin' horse in a Mx get-up. I know this may sound a bit insensitive, but I couldn't care less if Dave never "finds" himself. Keep him The Maxx forever. (Besides, it's obvious that Dave's identity isn't that important, considering you never show his damn face.)

Erica Capers

Los Angeles, CA

- (1) When is Maxx getting his own web-page, or does he already have one?
- (2) The powdered doughnut references evade me. What's up with that?
- (1) Not from us yet, but Jim Sinclair's workin' on it. We're thinking of including fan art and letters, plus previews of ishes in the works. Whatdaya think? Meanwhile, lots of Mxhds have excellent pages—check 'em out.
- (2) I've been thinking of doing an all-powdered-doughnut issue. Then again, most of my issues are... (see Mx 29, p. 4, panel 2).

Dear Sam,

I just read #31 and was very happy and excited to see the OLD Maxx back. This is awesome, Sam—I can't thank you enough for bringing the Pez-loving freak back. When I read the issue and got to the last few pages, it was like old times again. I swear I heard the first couple of notes of "Bad to the Bone" when Julie says "Sh*t" in the third panel of the last page.

Nick Van Cleve

Matteson, IL

Well, you'll probably hate that he drops out of this issue. But don't worry—he'll be back.

Dear Sam,

I've got a couple of questions for u:

- (1) Julie said that the story about Megan in #31 was the first part. Are u going to give us the rest? I found it very very very very very entertaining.

- (2) The woman Gone brought with him isSara's mom, Tilly. No?

Far from reality,
Close to insanity,
Kevin Simmons
Newark, NY

PS Let me give a shout out to my ppals (thanx to you & #27).
HI GALSI!



Martin Marberger
Ajax, Ont, Canada



- (1) I dropped the Megan story because I wasn't sure it was working. Do we need three more issues just to see a girl grow up enough to walk through an evil door of puberty and cross the street into adulthood?
- (2) No, and by now, you know the answer to this. But good guess, anyway.

Sam,

Please please please don't make a Maxx movie!! Some comics just don't cross over to the real world so well. Maxx would have to wear a fake suit with fake muscles, and that's stupid. Besides, who are you gonna find that has feet that huge anyway?

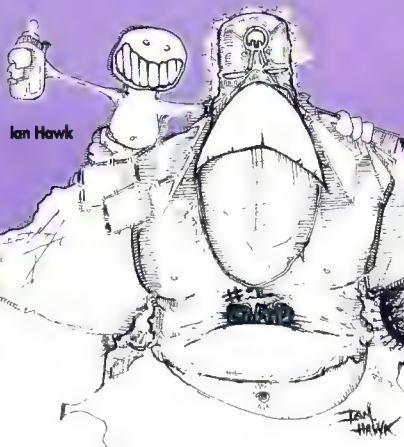
Charly
Concord, NC

OK. Done.

Good Ol' Sammy Kieth,

I am writing this letter in response to your "...but what do you folks think?" question about trying to go back and change things to have a better today. I have an opinion about that. If we go back and change our past, we won't be the person we are today. Yes, Julie's rape was awful. Yes, Gone leaving Sara as a child was terrible. Yes, Maxx (Dave) getting hit was horrible. And yes, Gone's abuse was painful. But all that past made them what they are today, whether good or bad. See, without all those bad things, there would be no comic book, but most importantly, it would be an unrealistic life. It's like this: The rainbow is beautiful, agree? And to make a rainbow, it takes sunshine AND rain. So if we want to live a rounded and colorful life like the rainbow, both joy AND sorrow must come to it. So now a real quick reality check, in the form of a run-on sentence:

Every single thing that happens in The Mx is based around Mr. Gone (Artie), but none of it would have happened if it wasn't for his abuse, saying not that his abuse



was good, but it led him to meet Tilly Jones; which means Sara would have never been born, which means she could have never gotten Mark taken away from Julie (but if Julie wasn't raped, she wouldn't have Mark in the first place), which means there would be no comic book, which would mean you quitting, which would lead me to getting on my knees and begging please please please don't QUIT!

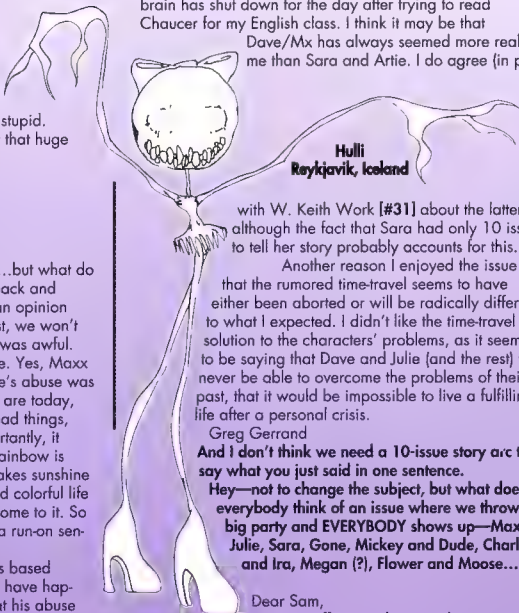
Per sempre un Mxhd,
Jennifer Campbell
Jefferson City, MO

That's probably the finest run-on sentence I've ever seen.

Dear Sam,

Having just read #31, I thought I'd better congratulate you on about the best issue of the series since #20. I can't really say why, perhaps because the analytical side of my brain has shut down for the day after trying to read Chaucer for my English class. I think it may be that

Dave/Mx has always seemed more real to me than Sara and Artie. I do agree (in part)



with W. Keith Work [#31] about the latter, although the fact that Sara had only 10 issues to tell her story probably accounts for this.

Another reason I enjoyed the issue was that the rumored time-travel seems to have either been aborted or will be radically different to what I expected. I didn't like the time-travel solution to the characters' problems, as it seemed to be saying that Dave and Julie (and the rest) will never be able to overcome the problems of their past, that it would be impossible to live a fulfilling life after a personal crisis.

Greg Gerrard

And I don't think we need a 10-issue story a/c to say what you just said in one sentence.

Hey—not to change the subject, but what does everybody think of an issue where we throw a big party and EVERYBODY shows up—Maxx, Julie, Sara, Gone, Mickey and Dude, Charlie and Ira, Megan (?), Flower and Moose...

Dear Sam,

First off, Maxx/Dave is the moose. Second, Dave Feiss did a great job on that cartoon sequence in #30. I laughed for about five minutes when I saw Uncle Italian Moose's hooves.

Sincerely,
Michael Norton
Manotick, ONT, Canada

Hey Sam and all you Mxhds,

I noticed in Maxx #5 that Dave Feiss was the creator of the Crappon Inna Hat. Well, he is also the creator of "Cow and Chicken", which premiered on Cartoon Network in July. Do you know Dave Feiss real well? Are you good friends?

Mxhd forever,
Matt Taylor
Youngstown, OH

Yeah, I know Dave—he's my cousin (feels more like a brother, actually). Famous in his own world of animation long before I got into comics, we now sit five feet apart in the same studio. I

show up in some of his work; he shows up in some of mine.

Dear Sam Kieth,

Hola, como estas? I just wanted to let you know that I am 100% Mexican (born in Mexico, raised here) and I also looove your comic. Yes, Mexicans also read your comic... As a Latina, people would not think I would be into comics,

but I am! And I'm proud to say I'm a MAXX fan! A true Maxx chick! Lluvia Arras Alhambra, CA PS I love how you mentioned my mother's favorite TV show, "Sabado gigante" in #30! **Now there's a show...**

Mr. Kieth—I've got to admit that for a second there, I thought The Maxx might have been getting just a bit boring...

Bear in mind that I didn't mean the writing was getting worse, or that the art was getting any less amazing!! But, with all the "real life" stories you were doing (maybe "non-outback" is a better term), and with Sara being temporarily dead, and with Mr. Gone being a nice guy now (not that I don't like ol' Gone as a "good guy", it's just that he made a really cool bad guy), I thought that maybe The Mx was losing the wacky excitement it once had.

But 30 and 31 certainly proved me wrong. The Fred Flower/Uncle Italian Moose story was hilarious, and 31, I think, pretty much gave us proof that yer book hasn't lost all its wackiness and maybe even gained some, what with Dave being back to his old Maxx-self ("Who's Dave?" I love that!!!), and Sara somehow turning into a giant ls/sexploding fairy/football. (By the way, is lsz now spelled ls or what?) [One ls=ls. Two lsz=lsz. This principle was established in Mx Trx, Issue #2, and we can't be messin' with it now.]

Anyway, just thought I'd tell ya how much I like yer work. I do have a few questions though... remember those "bloodworms" Gone was talking about way back in #1? What the heck are those?!!... And what happened to all the lines under the vowels when Gone talked? I miss those...

Keep up the good work!! ;)

Topher G. Mehlhoff

Bloodworms turn into waterworms and only show up in the Maxx movie screenplay (which we canned because of Charly's letter back there). As to the underlined vowels, when Mike Heisler lettered the book, he cursed the day he started underlining vowels. Since he left, I haven't had the guts to inflict that pain on anyone else.

Sam—

I mostly agree with W. Keith Work in #31. His points

are things I've similarly felt while reading the new issues. It's as if the story and characters just haven't clicked as much as in the older issues. But I think that it is valid to point out that the other story is completed. The Sara/Norbert story isn't complete yet, so of course we have misgivings on it. I remember feeling the exact same way when I was first reading the Julie/Gone story. Still, I do think that the Sara/Norbert story is missing something.

But I also think you have been developing some excellent characters (in Maxx and FOM). Even though we only see small scenes out of each character's life, your characters are very vivid, real, and lush. You have an excellent hold on seeing how other people live their lives, and it's given me a great hope, because before, I had always felt that most humans cannot see past their own selfish lives.

One more thing about what W. Keith said (and the Mxhds are gonna hate me for this)—I completely agree that you should not drudge up the past and try to change it. It will only ruin the beauty of what once existed. It's like a favorite song—when you first hear it, you can't get enough of it. But if you listen too much, you'll begin to hate it. It's OK to put in a couple of changes here and there, but don't try to re-work the Julie/Gone story. It works just how it is.

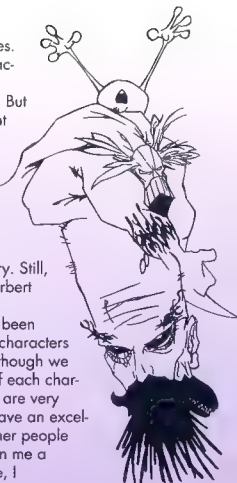
And in response to all the "sensitive" boys that the FOM letters claim to exist, it has also given me shreds of hope.

For all I have been able to find so far are "macho" types which I hate having to be in the same room as (they stare at women like we are hunks of meat and it is the most awful thing ever, especially if you have a brain). And 90% of the "sensitive" guys I've found have actually been just guys who wished they could be macho, but learned to grudgingly accept the fact that they weren't. So please, if you print this letter, include my email address so maybe, just maybe, one of those sensitive guys will write me. Just one more thing on the whole nerds vs. jocks subject: They both have to co-exist in this world, and neither should try to change into the other. They are both wanted, and they both have key elements in life. In other words, they are equal, so neither of them is a loser.

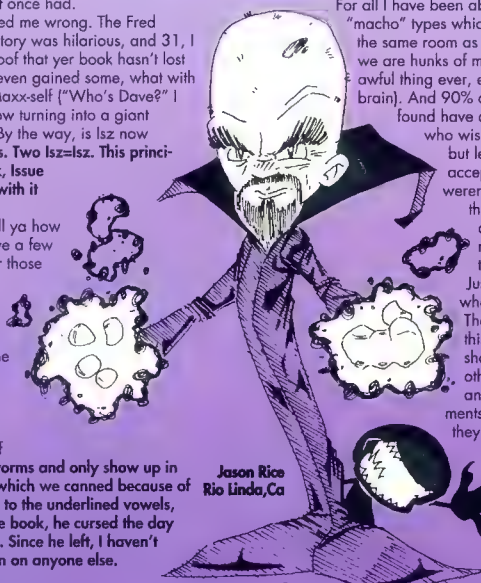
Brooke Boise, ID
somastars@aol.com
Well put. But the terms "past" and "future" are kind of irrelevant now that Glorie let Maj. Rosteval escape from the urn.



Adrian L. Barber London, Eng.



Ben Howlett Mackay, Australia



Jason Rice Rio Linda, Ca

TGP 7-17

Dear Mx people,
Speaking of Gone, the abuse issue really struck a chord in me and it almost made me cry. This is one of the many reasons why I consider The Maxx one of the best comics on the market. When a "comic" book can bring out deep emotions within you and even make you think about the relationships in your own life (for exemplo—FOM), then it deserves a metric butt-ton of credit.

Ward
"Mxhd Supreme"
Danovan
Coiron, MI

PS Fred Flower and Uncle Italian Moose rock mightily! If they have their own book, I'd read it.
If Dave or I had the time, we'd write it.

Hey I really love The Maxx! I'm one of your readers who isn't a teenager who has a horribly troubled life... in fact, I'm a guy who has been blessed with great Christian parents who have taught me good morals (not that all your readers are like the former).

Jacob Grimm

Cool.

Dear Sam,

I don't understand people bitching and griping about every little thing that happens and/or doesn't happen, complaining every time the story doesn't move through five plot-lines and sub-plot-lines every three pages. I love your book because it's real (to a certain degree). The people are very believable... they have faults and slow times and thoughts and depressions and loves, desires, hopes, dreams, failures, confusion, hate, grudges, and bell-bottoms... OK, well, I don't own any, but you see what I mean. It's like reading a diary, rather than a comicbook. I love getting visited by them every month (or so). It's like old friends: sometimes they show up, and nothing much happens, but you love seeing them. That's why I've stuck through this book after ten years of \$200-\$300 a month on comics, to now where all I buy is The Maxx. Your book has stuck with me, and always will.

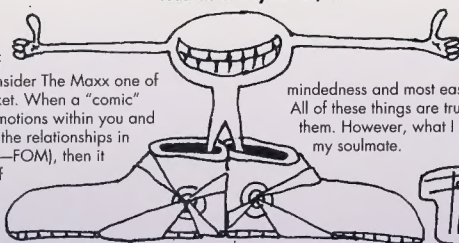
And I know that your characters will solve some of their problems, and the ones that aren't solved—well, that's life, isn't it? Unresolved problems happen all the time, and I don't expect you to have to tie everything up pretty and neat. Plus, I have a feeling that your characters write themselves, and you just take dictation from their lives, don't you? I know how that is.

A Thousand Prayers,
Marc Richardson
Columbia, MO

Dearest Sam,

Where do I begin when thanking you for everything you've given me? I suppose I could tell you how your characters have taught me (are still teaching me, in fact) how to transform my insecurities into personal strength. Or, perhaps I could identify myself as one of the many who have found, in Mx Trx, sanctuary, a kind of res-

Todd Marco-Doyletowns, PA



cue even, from an all-too-comfortable, over-riding sense of alienation. Then again, I could always just let you know how your work tends to expose even my best-disguised narrow-mindedness and most easily-dismissed self-doubts. All of these things are true, and I am grateful to you for them. However, what I really want to thank you for is my soulmate.



In Dec. of '95, I answered an ad in the Head-to-Head column. Soon, our letters became oxygen to each other. Finally,

after six months of writing, we got up the nerve to speak on the phone. On our third conversation, we decided to spend the rest of our lives together. On August 2, we met for the first time, and less than a week later, I moved all the way from Louisiana to Nebraska to live with him permanently.

Now, almost one year later, Dan and I are more in love than ever. He is the yang to my yin... without you, Sam, neither one of us would have had the courage to reach out and take a chance. Your work is sacred to us. Never underestimate its power and importance.

A maxx disciple for life,
Khrynn McManus
Valparaiso, NE

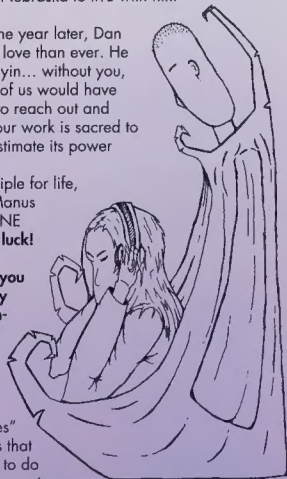
Thanks and good luck!

Now—Just when you thought everybody was gettin' all sensitive...

Sam—
Julie really WAS Megan, huh? If she's had some "homosexual urges" or whatever, does that have ANYTHING to do with the rest of the comic or not? Also, if you're anything like most comic artists, I'll bet you've drawn at least one or two sketches of Julie and Sara kissin'. If so, would you scan 'em and send 'em to me? Hell, I'll admit I'm a fan-boy.

Erik M. Rion

Sigh. Any of you "Women Behind The Maxx" wanna tackle this one?



Gabe-Tustin, CA

Dear Master Doodler,

I'm 12 years old, and The Mx is one of the best books that I have ever read. I am very glad you did not go with the flow and have the majority of your book so close-to-they-might-as-well-be-naked chicks.

Iago's Lackey,
Morgan Bivens
Granite City, IL

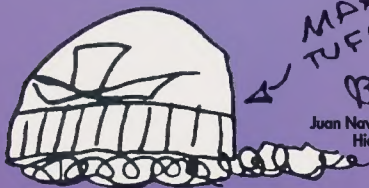
Thanks for stepping in, Morgan.

Hello,

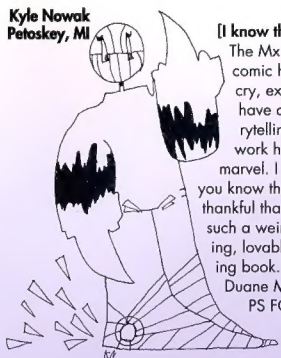
I just wanted to let you know what a great job you do, as well as the rest of your team. I've been a reader since #1, and though I often can't grasp what is going on

MAXX
TUFF SCRUBBING
BUBBLES!

Juan Navarro, Jr.
Hialeah, FL



Kyle Nowak
Petoskey, MI



[I know the feeling], I like The Mx anyway. No comic has ever made me cry, except yours. You have a great gift for storytelling, and your artwork has always been a marvel. I just wanted to let you know this, and that I am thankful that you have put out such a weird, funny, sickening, lovable, thought-provoking book. Keep it up.

Duane M. Johnson

PS FOM #1 was, in my opinion, one of the best stories you ever wrote.

It scared me how much it reminded me of a past relationship I was in. It was simply a great issue. Thanxx.

Speaking of relationship horror stories, I was thinking of revisiting Mickey and Dude 20 years later, locked in a room with a madman who forces them to examine their relationship. Anybody up for another round of those two?

Dear Sir Kieth,

This is great stuff, man. Although I cannot relate to any of the characters like so many others do, I still enjoy the comic. Thank you for your efforts to make this a good book, and thanks for "Head-to-Head".

Will Mr. Messner-Loebs be making his way back anytime soon? Also—I could stand to see some more Fred Flower and Uncle Italian Moose (and Crappon).

True Mxhd,
Doug M. Coleman
Rochester, NY

Bill has a project of his own, called Bliss Alley for Valentino's company through Image. It's about time he got back to his stuff. We miss Bill around here, but he did have a whole career before Maxx. Mxhds owe it to themselves to check out Bill's pre/post-Mx work such as Journey and Bliss Alley (see ad this ish).

Yo, Sam,

I agree with Mike Petite and "Mutt" that Mark's Maxx should be female. But a beaver? Fox? No way! Mark's spirit animal should be a cow!

Maxx out,
Alex Campbell
Chicago, IL

A ...cow? ...That's just bizarre enough to work... Somebody was pretty peeved about the misspelling of his name—we accidentally changed "Vandehey" to "Vandeley" in #31, then made a reference to Seinfeld in that connection. Just to let you know, Ryan, we were NOT making fun of your name. Around here, we don't make fun of names. People, maybe, but not names.

Dear Sam,

Could you please misspell my name if you would (gulp) print this in Mx Trx? Please? I want to be a part of the Club.

A BIG Mxhd,
Mike Bratt

Alright, Mipe, but this is the last one! I can't just go around misspelling everyone's name—I do have some principles! Please—don't anyone else ask! Enough already!!! (Next

thing I know, people will be asking me to misspell their city, too!]

Dear Mr. Kieth,

Just today my friend called me and told me that as of October, The Maxx might not exist anymore. Something about the comic not being in the Wizard magazine subscription thingy??? Is there truth to this, or will I have to disembowel my fiendish friend for telling a lie?

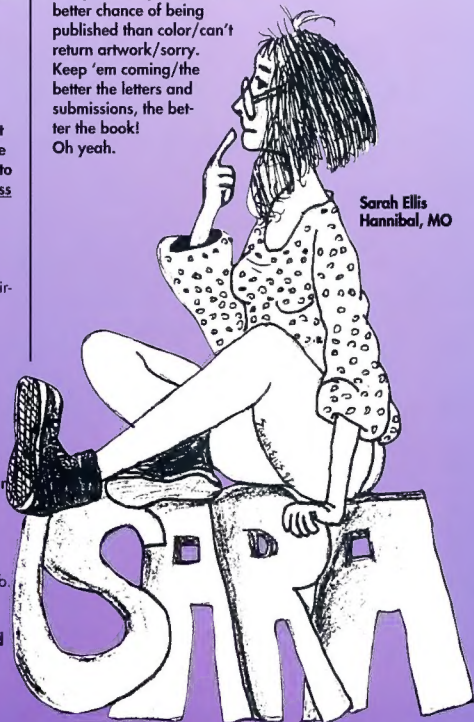
Your friend,
Nicholas Savage

PS If it's not true, can I disembowel my friend anyway?

Disembowel away—The Maxx lumbers on. What your friend is talking about, though, is that we sometimes skip a month in your comic shop's ordering catalog since, like Spawn and a lot of books, we have recently adopted a staggered schedule, trying to come out every six weeks instead of the unrealistic once a month. So, no, there is no Maxx solicited for October, even though one will likely appear on the stands during that month. It's complicated. But never fear—the Heads won't let this beast die.

PS/HOUSEKEEPING DETAILS WE GET ASKED ALL THE TIME:

No subscriptions or retail sales available/sorry. Email is cool/include name & city please/we no print email addresses unless requested. Use "Head-to-Head" to find back issues/fan clubs/whatever (use the address in the indicia)/postcards are cheap and easy like us/WRITE LEGIBLY. No we don't print all the letters or art we get/too many/yes SAM DOES read them ALL/you might get answered or printed or edited/you might not/life's funny that way. B&w art has better chance of being published than color/can't return artwork/sorry. Keep 'em coming/the better the letters and submissions, the better the book! Oh yeah.



Sarah Ellis
Hannibal, MO

THE KIETHS

INTERVIEW THEMSELVES

(SINCE NOBODY ELSE WILL)



SAM: Hey—what's goin' on here?!?

KATHY: Well... while I'm typing Maxx Traxx and Head to Head, I thought I might as well type myself into the book.

S: Why now and not before?

K: Aw gee—it's your book. You thunk it up, you draw it, you write it. I don't wanna just be suckin' off your fame...

S: Horse pucky! You've been with me for almost 20 years—married for 15. You deserve a purple heart for that alone! Besides, Head to Head was your idea in the first place, and you still sort it and type it...

K: And misspell names...

S: You organize all the fan mail for me to read, type Maxx Traxx, proof it when it's ready to print—

K: And misspell names and lose addresses...

S: Help Ronna lay out the schedule for every issue, pay the bills, get on my butt when I'm falling behind—

K: ...daily...

S: And now, since Issue 30, you type my scripts to send to the letterer, and prbof 'em when they're done.

K: And misspell names...

S: Get OVER it! People misspell "Kieth" all the time.

K: Yeah—but now they won't be able to email us if they do! So what else do you have to say about me, now that I'm out of the closet?

S: Well, I think your new title, "Head Gardener," is perfect. You've always thought Maxxheads were wise and witty and well-worth "cultivation". And, on a good day, you take all the sh*t I hand you and compost it into pure gold...

K: Yeah, then the rest of the year we scream and pout like every other couple. Weren't Mickey and Dude about us?

S: Naw—don't look for parallels there...well...not too many...

K: It's true—I did throw away my "Safety Bob" several weeks ago. But as for your crayons...

S: Very funny.

WE'RE HERE,
MAXX. THIS IS
WHERE IT ALL
STARTED!

CHUNG
CHUNG
CHUNG

STEWART
MAXX
HEAD
TO
HEAD



StemL@ch

Mark Stemlach
Minneapolis, MN